

Digital cinema trots to the Fox

While the d-cinema industry clamors to outfit the circuits, specialized single-screen venues also seek the technology. Here's how Dolby, NEC and Strong ushered the Fox Theatre in Atlanta into the 21st century. *By Annlee Ellingson*



Digital deployment has begun. That much is clear. Access Integrated Technologies subsidiary Christie/AIX has outfitted 1,400 screens with digital equipment. Technicolor Digital Cinema, a division of Thomson, has identified several hundred screens for its initial beta test. And National CineMedia, the joint venture between AMC, Cinemark and Regal, is developing an internal business plan for its 14,000-screen network.

But, as systems integrators and equipment vendors vie for contracts to outfit the multiplexes of the major exhibitors, another type of potential client for digital cinema has quietly emerged: the single-screen movie palace. Tied to each of the deployment entities' rollouts are top-tier exhibits such as Carmike and National Amusements as well as the aforementioned big three. However, the Fox Theatre in Atlanta, too, has purchased and installed an NEC STARUS NC2500S projector and Dolby Digital Cinema system for its historic, multipurpose venue.

"The homerun for any projector manufacturer is the Regals of the world or the Cinemarks, the biggies, because they've got thousands of screens," admits Ray Boegner, senior vice president of Ballantyne. "[But] there's only one Fox Theatre."

Opulent and ornate, with minarets and onion domes on the outside and a Bedouin canopy and aquamarine sky with twinkling stars and drifting clouds